BISS Biodiversity Information Science and Standards

Biodiversity Information Science and Standards 2: e26529
doi: 10.3897/biss.2.26529

OPEN ACCESS

Conference Abstract

Revitalization of the University of Iowa's Bird Egg Collection after 100 Years of Dormancy

Cody J. Crawford‡, Cindy E. Opitz§, Trina E. Roberts|

‡ Student, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, United States of America
§ Collections Manager, Museum of Natural History, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, United States of America
| Director, University of Iowa Pentacrest Museums, Iowa City, Iowa, United States of America

Corresponding author: Cody J. Crawford (cody-j-crawford@uiowa.edu), Cindy E. Opitz (cindy-opitz@uiowa.edu), Trina E. Roberts (trina-roberts@uiowa.edu)

Received: 08 May 2018 | Published: 13 Jun 2018

Citation: Crawford C, Opitz C, Roberts T (2018) Revitalization of the University of Iowa's Bird Egg Collection after 100 Years of Dormancy. Biodiversity Information Science and Standards 2: e26529. https://doi.org/10.3897/biss.2.26529

Abstract

The University of Iowa Museum of Natural History's egg collection spans many avian orders, 6 continents, and over 160 years. However, this collection of approximately 17,000 egg specimens has remained disorganized and underutilized for most of its history. Only in 2017 did the museum begin taking significant steps toward organizing the eggs, cataloging them, and making them and their data available for researchers. Like many museum egg collections, ours is composed mostly of donated private collections originally collected, purchased, or traded between 1870 and 1910, and with variable amounts of data associated with individual specimens. Since the time the eggs were collected, most of them have been separated from the cards on which collectors stored their data.

Much of the current project revolves around reuniting eggs and data cards. We have scanned over 2,000 egg cards, crowdsourced transcriptions of the handwriting, verified the accuracy of each transcription, and added the scans and transcriptions to our database for easy access by museum staff and volunteers. We are using the egg cards, any data written on the eggs, and many books and websites to match eggs with egg cards and integrate the data into our database. The eggs are then placed in new cabinets and relabelled with newly generated database information. Each egg set will be photographed and

© Crawford C et al. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

georeferenced if possible, using the GEOLocate web application. At the end of this project, these specimen records will be integrated into biodiversity repositories such as GBIF (Global Biodiversity Information Facility), Integrated Digitized Biocollections (iDigBio), and VertNet, so they can be downloaded and used by researchers globally, as our bird, mammal and insect collections already are. Most of the work is carried out by a team of volunteers and interns, usually undergraduate students, without whom this project would not be possible at its current pace.

Keywords

egg, ornithology, collection, digitization, crowdsourcing, transcription, specimen data

Presenting author

Cindy E. Opitz

Presented at

2018 SPNHC Meeting, Dunedin, New Zealand